

FIGURE 1

Site Classification System and Conservation Measures
for Butler’s Gartersnake Conservation Strategy

March 31, 2005

	Site Classification Criteria	Conservation Measures
<div>Tier 1 Minimal Conservation Value</div>	<div><div>➤</div>If the total suitable habitat patch is less than 10 acres, regardless of habitat quality, OR</div> <div><div>➤</div>If the total suitable habitat patch is between 10 to 20 acres with poor habitat quality</div>	<div><div>1.</div>All existing wetland/water regulation requirements remain in effect.</div> <div><div>2.</div>A letter from the Department is required for a project to be covered under the Tier 1 Broad Incidental Take Authorization.</div> <div><div>3.</div>Consider voluntary measures to protect snake at proposed site location.</div>
<div>Tier 2 Moderate Conservation Value</div>	<div><div>➤</div>If the total suitable habitat patch is between 10 to 20 acres with moderate to good habitat quality, OR</div> <div><div>➤</div>If the total suitable habitat patch is between 20 to 30 acres with poor to moderate habitat quality</div>	<div><div>1.</div>The Department has concluded, based on the current science available, that Tier 2 sites do not contribute significantly to the long-term conservation of the Butler’s gartersnake. As such, future conservation efforts will focus primarily on Tier 3 sites and the Department has proposed a broad incidental take authorization for Tier 2 sites with the same conservation measures as the Tier 1 authorization. However, until broad incidental take of Tier 2 sites is authorized, any project on a Tier 2 site that results in take will require an individual incidental take authorization with the following conservation measures:<div><div>a.</div>All existing wetland/water regulation requirements remain in effect.</div><div><div>b.</div>If project impacts suitable upland habitat of poor quality, protect 75’ average width of upland habitat around wetland habitat – <u>Protected Habitat</u>. Snake exclusion fencing must be installed prior to 3/16. If not, moving snakes outside of construction zone likely required.</div><div><div>c.</div>If project impacts suitable upland habitat of moderate to good quality, protect 180’ average width of upland habitat around wetland habitat – <u>Protected Habitat</u>. Snake exclusion fencing must be installed prior to 3/16, if not, moving snakes outside of construction zone likely required.</div><div><div>d.</div>If project impacts suitable wetland habitat, then snake exclusion fencing must be installed prior to construction. Moving snakes outside of construction zone likely required.</div><div><div>e.</div>Periodic maintenance of suitable upland habitat required per habitat management guidance.</div><div><div>f.</div>A site’s Protected Habitat must be protected in perpetuity through deed restriction or other legal document.</div></div> <div><div>2.</div>The Department will encourage and pursue opportunities for restoration of Tier 2 sites to a Tier 3 condition.</div>
<div>Tier 3 Significant Conservation Value</div>	<div><div>➤</div>If the total suitable habitat patch is between 20 to 30 acres with good habitat quality</div> <div><div>➤</div>If the total suitable habitat patch is greater than 30 acres regardless of habitat quality</div>	<div><div>1.</div>All existing wetland/water regulation requirements remain in effect.</div> <div><div>2.</div>For privately-owned sites<div><i>Measures to avoid incidental take include:</i></div><div><div>a.</div>Presence/Absence surveys will be required at all Tier 3 sites where snakes have not already been confirmed. If presence confirmed, the Department reserves the right to conduct a population assessment.</div><div><div>b.</div>If project impacts suitable upland habitat of poor quality, protect 120’ average width of upland habitat around wetland habitat = <u>Protected Habitat</u>. Snake exclusion fencing must be installed prior to March 16.</div><div><div>c.</div>If project impacts suitable upland habitat of moderate to good quality, protect 300’ average width of upland habitat around wetland habitat = <u>Protected Habitat</u>. Snake exclusion fencing must be installed prior to March 16.</div><div><div>d.</div>Implement the Department’s authority to protect a 75’ protective area for areas of special natural resources interest (NR 151).</div><div><div>e.</div>Within-patch mitigation: the above 120’/300’ upland habitat areas can be exchanged for the restoration of unsuitable habitat to appropriate habitat elsewhere within the same habitat patch (see definitions). The habitat exchange should result in “No Net Loss” of overall habitat when restoration is completed. A minimum upland setback of 120’ from the wetland habitat and a minimum width of 120’ is required to ensure that restored habitat is sufficient to support and protect snakes. The restored habitat that is exchanged must be protected in perpetuity per (g) below.</div><div><div>f.</div>Periodic maintenance of suitable upland habitat required per habitat management guidance.</div><div><div>g.</div>A site’s Protected Habitat must be protected through conservation easement or other legal document.</div></div> <div><i>If incidental take cannot be avoided, then incidental take authorization is required on a project by project basis with the measures to minimize take to be determined by the Department.</i></div> <div><div>3.</div>For publicly-owned sites:<div>Publicly owned Tier 3 sites are especially important due to their significant acreage of suitable upland habitat and because they typically have conservation objectives compatible with the Conservation Strategy. Public sites will be treated in the same manner as private sites described above. However, the Department will work with public landowners to develop site-specific habitat management plans and conservation agreements for activities that are in line with the Conservation Strategy.</div></div>

Explanation

Proposed project sites that may impact suitable habitat for the Butler’s gartersnake will be evaluated and classified according to the Site Classification Criteria. The criteria are used to evaluate the entire suitable habitat patch, including that portion of the patch that is not included within the project site. Conservation measures will be applied to projects based on site classification. Incidental take authorization is required for each individual project if take is likely to occur.

Broad incidental take authorization for projects that result only in the *Temporary Disturbance of Butler’s Habitat* was finalized by the Department in August 2004. The authorization requires that disturbed Butler’s gartersnake habitat be restored to its pre-activity condition or a condition that improves habitat for the snake following completion of the activity. See the final authorization at <http://dnr.wi.gov/org/land/er/take/TempHab.htm>.

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